

**LISTING OF CLAIMS**

1-8. (cancelled)

9. (currently amended) A method for picking up and handling filled, sealed, rectangular pouches, each pouch comprising where each of said pouches comprises two lateral films with a U-shaped folded bottom film between the lateral films, and where the pouches stand on one of two longitudinal sides and said pouches are arranged in parallel in a row[[],] and standing on one of two longitudinal sides, and said pouches having a facing upper longitudinal side, the method comprising:

picking up the pouches and wherein said pouches are picked up with a gripper mechanism having finger-like gripper elements that are substantially mutually parallel and project substantially perpendicularly from a gripper carrier; arranged in a comb-like manner;

wherein the gripper elements are moved in a parallel path between adjacent upper longitudinal sides of adjacent pouches, in a longitudinal direction of the upper longitudinal sides, from the bottom side of the pouches; and

wherein picking up each pouch comprises gripping the upper longitudinal side of the pouch between gripper elements, at least one of which is movable or comprises a movable element.

10. (original) A method according to claim 9, wherein a row of 5 to 100 pouches is simultaneously gripped.

11. (cancelled)

12. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein said movable element is an extendable piston enabling a longitudinal side of a pouch to be picked up in clamping manner.

13. (previously presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein a main extension plane may be identified for each pouch, which plane substantially contains all the lateral edges of the respective pouch, and where the pouches are gripped in an orientation in which the main extension plane of each pouch is inclined to the vertical by an angle of  
5 less than 60°.
14. (previously presented) A method according to claim 12, wherein the main extension plane of each pouch to be gripped is substantially vertical.
15. (previously presented) A method according to claim 9 wherein the longitudinal side on which each pouch stands has a horizontal orientation.